



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 2, 2020**

**Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – Total of 365

Friday: 5; Saturday: 2; Sunday: 1; Monday: 2; Tuesday: 4

Total deaths in Scott County: 10

**Rock Island County** – 17 new cases for a total of 717

Currently in hospital: 4

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 26

**Today's call**

A video recording of today's media call can be found at  
<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

**Racism hurts health**

Remarks from Janet Hill, chief operating officer of the Rock Island County Health Department

Early in our response to COVID-19, a thoughtful pastor in East Moline engaged me in a discussion about Illinois' mask requirement. The Rev. P. Wonder Harris and I agreed that facial coverings were essential to slowing the spread of COVID-19. He rightly was concerned about the safety of people of color behind those masks – especially young African-American men. We talked about the dual risks of not wearing a mask and touching it after putting it on. His response made me ashamed that I hadn't thought of it myself: "100 percent of my skin is a risk factor."

I hadn't considered that people of color would be more at risk to be harmed by wearing a mask because it has not been my lived experience. I am grateful to Pastor Harris for helping me understand. I also am grateful to East Moline Police Chief Jeff Ramsey for connecting the three of us to talk about how to keep all citizens as safe as possible during a global pandemic.

Public health officials, including this one, are concerned that large protests over police brutality across the country could lead to more transmission of the virus. We must, however, understand the underlying reason that the protests and this global pandemic share common denominators: systemic and institutionalized racism. Rev. Harris calls this "the Coronavirus and the Elephant" in a unity policy proposal on his website, [p wonder.org](http://p wonder.org).

Cops like Chief Ramsey are the good guys. Just as a few protestors who became violent should not erase the important message that we all must hear, we also must make clear that a few bad

cops do not speak for the vast majority of good, respectful police officers who went into public service to help others and make a difference in their communities.

We in public health know people of color fare worse in all health outcomes, not just with COVID-19. However, data across the country show that people of color and all individuals with lower socio-economic status are at increased risk of COVID-19 infection and death.

In Rock Island County, we have reported 717 cases of COVID-19, while Scott County has 365 cases. Rock Island County's demographics include both a higher minority population and level of poverty than Scott County. The median household income also is lower in Rock Island County than across the river.

We have logged these disparities in our joint Community Health Assessment for more than 15 years. Rock Island County has a higher rate of diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and other chronic conditions. The reasons behind these factors are known as the social determinants of health, including economic stability, housing, education, the built environment, and access to well-paying and safe jobs.

Our public health practice in both Rock Island and Scott counties works to ease the disparity of the social determinants. We rely on leaders from health care, the social services sector, government, schools, transportation and the business community to help us improve the health outcomes of every resident in both of our counties. They and we know how deeply the social determinants can cut into health outcomes.

We also know that social connectedness helps mitigate the effects of the social determinants of health. That is to say, the more you feel a part of your community, the better your health outcomes will be. Our sincere hope is that Quad Citians – indeed everyone living in this country – recognize this moment when the elephant made coronavirus so much worse. We must embrace having more conversations and an increasingly connected community. We must all strive for racial and health equity during this global pandemic, and more importantly, beyond.

### **Stressful time**

Remarks from Ed Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department

Stress is defined as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances. I would say that the last three months qualify as very demanding circumstances; therefore, we have been living in a very stressful time. The impacts of COVID-19 on your job, your ability to see your family and friends, and the health of your loved ones are all challenges that many are facing at this time.

Additionally, the events of the last week are requiring our community to have uncomfortable, perhaps stressful, yet very necessary conversations about how our community handles issues dealing with race and the inequities that exist not only in health, but in income, housing, education, neighborhoods, and the justice system.

We know that these types of stressors, compounded with the daily stress many in our community may face due to housing, healthcare, finances, and social struggles, can take a toll. Without the right support, individuals and families can find themselves struggling for relief. For some, this can mean turning to alcohol or other substances in an effort to ease stress.

Our community is rich in resources to support not just mental health needs, but substance abuse needs as well.

We have invited Mary Petersen, chief operations officer and director of behavioral health services for UnityPoint Health-Robert Young Center to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on substance abuse in our community.

### **Mental health resources**

Remarks from Mary Petersen, chief operating officer and director of behavioral health services of Robert Young Center-UnityPoint Health

- **563-322-2667** Press 2 to schedule appointment to access services
- **Individuals with Substance Use Disorder** have the potential for increased risk to COVID
  - Opioid, Methamphetamines and Alcohol – Impacts respiratory system and immune system
- **Additional risk** individuals frequently have co-morbidities furthering risk for COVID and other diseases factors may include:
  - Loss of employment, social isolation, loss of support system, homelessness
- **COVID** – Uncertainty with current events may increase stress, fear, anxiety – combined with social isolation may trigger relapse
- **Role of Family and Friends extremely important**
  - Stay in contact with those in recovery – utilize virtual platforms, phone calls, in person visits with appropriate social distancing
  - Obtain resources to support / inform and assist individual to access treatment
- **CADS Services:** available to residents of the Quad Cities (Rock Island and Scott counties)
  - Substance Use Disorder Clinical Assessment, inpatient detox, residential, transitional services, outpatient individual and group therapy, in-person and virtual visits available, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), prevention and education services, including school-based services offered to adults, youth and families.
- **CADS Volumes:**
  - 2019 CADS provided 58,000 patient visits and served 2,647 unduplicated patients

- 2020 Patient volumes were increased from the previous year until the end of March
- COVID impact—immediate drop in individuals seeking treatment via the emergency department or outpatient clinic visits. Overall patient volume decrease by 70 percent end of March through the end of May. Beginning of June, individuals beginning to reach back out for treatment and services.
- **CADS Path Forward:**
  - Converted all outpatient individual and group therapy to Virtual Visits
  - Implemented all initial patient assessments to telehealth
  - Inpatient detox and residential facility implemented COVID screenings prior to admission, social distancing strategies, limited outside visitors, increased phone calls/virtual visits with family and friends, hand hygiene and cloth masks became common place.
  - All facilities and services remained operational – care delivery changed to include virtual option for safety
- **Additional Resources**
  - Substance Abuse & Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA)
  - National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism (NIAAA)
  - Substance Use Prevention & Recovery (SUPR)

### **More information**

- [www.TogetherQC.com](http://www.TogetherQC.com)
- [coronavirus.iowa.gov](http://coronavirus.iowa.gov)
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>

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## Center for Alcohol & Drug Services- (CADS)

(563) 322-2667

- Services Provided
  - Substance Use Disorder Clinical Assessment
  - Inpatient Detox, Residential and Transitional Services
  - Outpatient Individual & Group Therapy
  - In-Person & Virtual Visits Available
  - Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT)
  - Prevention & Education Services (Including School Based)
  - Services Provided for Adults, Youth and Families